



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Fairbanks

## *Fish & Wildlife Field Office*

### Salmon Enumeration Weir Projects

The Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Field Office uses resistance board weirs in several important drainages to gather accurate information about spawning salmon stocks. Weirs allow biologists to determine the escapement and run timing of salmon stocks, as well as determining their sex and size composition.

A weir consists of interlinked floating panels that stretch across the whole river. The panels are anchored to the river bottom on the upstream side. This allows water to flow through, but stops the upstream passage of fish. The center of the weir has a chute with a gated holding pen. As salmon swim into the pen, biologists count the fish and identify the species, then release them to continue swimming upstream to spawn.

This office currently operates weirs on the Gisasa and Andreafsky Rivers.

The Gisasa River weir has operated seasonally since 1994. This project is located in the lower Koyukuk River drainage, a major tributary to the Yukon River. This project primarily counts summer chum and chinook salmon as they return to spawn.

The Andreafsky River weir was initiated in 1994. It is located in the lower Yukon River drainage near the community of St. Mary's. This project monitors all five species of Pacific salmon.

Weirs can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of aerial surveys in estimating escapement. Salmon escapement recorded at the Gisasa River weir has thus far been between 7.5 and 19.4 times greater than the number derived from aerial surveys conducted in the same area.



Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Office  
Steve Lewis, Field Supervisor  
101 12th Ave., Box 17, Room 222  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
907-456-0219